

Symphony. Piston, in writing about the work, stated in part: "The makeup of the traditional woodwind quintet may be said, in a sense, to be ideal as chamber music, in which the individual voices' blend complement one another without giving up any of their distinction and independence...Beyond these general characterizations, the listener needs no further preparation, as the music is straightforward and without formal complexity."

Donald Erb, presently a faculty member at Indiana University, is widely known in contemporary circles as a composer of wit, humor, facility, and curiosity. His instrumental works embrace a number of diverse forms (including a Trombone Concerto written for the UW's Stuart Dempster), and tonight's work, his "The Last Quintet" for woodwind quintet is no exception. His humorous (or tragic?) vision of the final gasp of the wind quintet is seen as an ensemble driven to the fringes of its sonic capabilities: instruments producing much smoke but little fire, reduced to extracting primal sounds from component parts, and suffering the ignominy of summoning assistance from such para-musical adjuncts as harmonicas, wind-chimes, maracas, slide-whistles, tuned water-glasses, and a featureless electronic drone. The work, commissioned by the Nashville Symphony Orchestra with assistance from the National Endowment for the Arts, is in six brief movements, the conclusion of which is clearly perceived—arresting in fact. It so happens that Mr. Erb will be in the audience for this evening's performance, ready and available to respond to your questions and/or observations afterwards in the Green Room.

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC
at the
University of Washington

presents

THE SONI VENTORUM

Felix Skowronek, *flute* Laila Storch, *oboe*
William McColl, *clarinet* David Kappy, *horn*
Arthur Grossman, *bassoon*

CD 14, 779

with guest artist

Patricia Michaelian, *piano*

February 23, 1987

8:00 PM, Meany Theater

Tape 11, 151

PROGRAM

GIOACCHINO ROSSINI
(1792-1868)

Quartet No. 5 in D major
(ca. 1807-09) for Flute,
Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon
Allegro spiritoso 13:30
Andante assai
Rondo

FRANCIS POULENC
(1899-1963)

Sextour pour flûte, hautbois,
clarinette, basson et cor
(1932-39)
Allegro vivace: Très Vite et
emporté
Divertissement: Andantino
Finale: Prestissimo

INTERMISSION

15:32

Doc-p
COMPACT
Disc
567
1987
2-23
DUB

Tape 1.152.

WALTER PISTON
(1894-1976)

162
3801
ES-5

DONALD ERB
(b. 1927) - 2008

Quintet for Wind
Instruments (1956)
Animato
Con tenerezza 16:44
Scherzando
Allegro comodo

"The Last Quintet" for
woodwind quintet (1984)
13:50

About tonight's guest artist

Patricia Michaelian received her early piano training at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and later studied at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia with Rudolf Serkin and Mieczyslaw Horszowski. At age 15 she appeared as soloist with the New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein conducting, and has also soloed with such orchestras as the Philadelphia, Boston "Pops", New Orleans, St. Paul Chamber, and the California Chamber Symphony. She has toured extensively as a recitalist and chamber musician, and has performed with the Seattle Chamber Music Festival. Ms. Michaelian joined the University of Washington piano faculty in the fall of 1984.

Rossini's six quartets for wind instruments (they are also widely known in a version for strings) date from his student days at the Liceo Communale in Bologna. At the time, his devotion to the chamber works of Haydn and Mozart earned him the nickname *Il tedesco* (the little German) among his classmates, but the Italianate operatic melodies with which the quartets abound give a clearer indication of the direction Rossini would follow. The quartets, though uncomplicated musically, are a virtuosic challenge to wind players and a delight to audiences.

Francis Poulenc's *Sextet* for piano and winds is a marvelous example of the wit and humor of 50 years ago, especially through the eyes and ears of one of the prime members of France's iconoclastic *Les Six*. Yet, Poulenc is hardly all irreverence and impertinence here; his serious and even beautifully expressive melodic gift is every bit in evidence. This conflict or contrast is clearly evidenced by the very layout of the work itself. The first movement begins with unmistakable nose-thumbing and raucous behavior before relaxing into a poetic mid-section. The second movement is the reverse: poetry before a seemingly profane excursion into music-hall banter. The finale begins much as the first movement, but in due course the hubbub subsides, and the *Sextet* ends with a calming, then majestic assertion—perhaps of its place as his most substantial chamber work?

Walter Piston, one of this country's most distinguished composers, enjoyed a long and productive tenure at Harvard University. His influence extended nationwide, both through his students and through his published works and texts. His basic compositional neoclassic style is accessible to a wide audience, yet the skill and craft of his music is recognized by most musicians. His *Quintet for Wind Instruments* was commissioned by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation in the Library of Congress and was first performed there by members of the Boston